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Concessions to the members of Christian Scheduled Castes.

* 980 *Q.*—Sri ANTONY PETER : Will the Hon. the Minister for Religious Endowments and Transport be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether the facilities afforded to the Scheduled Castes in this State in regard to Education and Employment are extended to the members of Christian Scheduled Castes; and

(*b*) if so, to what extent and under what conditions?

The Hon. Sri B. PARAMESWARAN :—" (*a*) & (*b*) The fee concession to Scheduled Castes in Arts and Professional colleges has been extended to converts from Scheduled Castes if the conversion is either of the student or his parent or his guardian. The full fee concession in schools has not been extended but the converts are given half fee concession subject to the condition already referred to.

The concession regarding reservation of seats in Professional colleges has not been extended to converts but the converts are included in the category of Backward Classes for whom 25 per cent of the seats is reserved.

The concession regarding scholarships and boarding grants has been extended to converts. The scholarship amount covers the half fee if any payable by the converts.

In the matter of appointment to posts of teachers, tutor-*cum*-wardens, and tutor-*cum*-matrons wardens and assistant matrons in the school and hostels maintained by the Harijan Welfare Department, the converts from Scheduled Castes are shown preference next to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

In regard to appointment to all other gazetted and non-gazetted posts, the persons who are themselves converts to Christianity from Scheduled Castes are treated as backward classes and shown preference as such."

Sri ANTONY PETER :—" Are not the Government aware of the fact that both the Prime Minister and the President of India have said that the order of 10th August 1950 is mainly for the purpose of giving representations in the Central and State Legislatures and as far as other State aid and facilities are concerned, there should be no religious distinction? "

The Hon. Sri B. PARAMESWARAN :—" Sir, in 1951, if I remember correct, members of the Christian community with Dr. Cherian, Mr. Dorairaj and Mr. Wilson waited in deputation on the former Chief Minister, Sri P. S. Kumarasamy Raja and we revised certain rules and regulations to conform to the directions given by the President of India. As a result of this, the converts to Christianity from the Scheduled Castes have been amply provided for."

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SRI S. DEIVASIGAMANY :—" May I know whether the Government maintain a register of Christian converts from Scheduled Castes and have they not any statistics with regard to their number? What is the time limit fixed for these Christian converts to become reconverts without any distinction of caste or creed? "

THE HON. SRI B. PARAMESWARAN :—" With regard to the latter part of the question, it is left to the individual free will of the Christians to reconvert themselves. With regard to the first part of the question, we do not have any statistics. As and when students from a particular section of the population apply to the Director of Harijan Welfare or the educational officers for concession, we collect the necessary figures and data. That is the only statistics that we could collect."

SRI S. SWAYAMPRAKASAM :—" When a person becomes Christian, he only changes his religion. So there is no change in his economic position. Inasmuch as the policy of the Government in granting these concessions is to help those belonging to a particular community whose economic position is very bad, may I know why the Government should make a distinction in this case when there is only a change in religion and not in the economic position? "

THE HON. SRI B. PARAMESWARAN :—" Practically all the concessions granted to Scheduled Castes are extended to those people also, except perhaps in one or two cases, like reservation of seats, appointments, etc. I think the hon. Member need not press this question as Christianity is a pure religion and untouchability should not be imported into it."

SRI ANTONY PETER :—" In view of the letters written by the President and Prime Minister of India expressing their opinion that there should be no religious discrimination in the matter of State aid and other facilities, will the Government come forward to accept it and grant these facilities without showing any distinction on grounds of religion? "

THE HON. SRI B. PARAMESWARAN :—" Sir, I have already said that in obedience to the wishes of the President of India, we have changed our rules and regulations. If the hon. Member puts a separate question, I think I will be able to place the entire correspondence on the table of the House."

SRI K. VINAYAKAM :—" May I know what is the *modus operandi* which the Government adopt to find out whether one belonged to the Scheduled Caste before he got himself converted to Christianity or whether he actually belonged to a forward community before conversion, but to deceive the Government says that he belonged to Scheduled Castes before conversion? "

THE HON. SRI B. PARAMESWARAN :—" On the certificates issued by the authorities, we find out whether he belonged to the backward class or forward class before conversion."

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SRI S. C. C. ANTONY PILLAI :—" May I know why there should be any difference in the concessions granted to these people? Some are granted half-fee concessions and others are granted full-fee concessions. Secondly, may I know whether this rule applies to converts from the Harijan community to any other religion also or only to Christianity? If it does not apply, why such a distinction is made?"

THE HON. SRI B. PARAMESWARAN :—" Moplahs of Malabar district are also classified under backward classes. As I said, there is only a very slight difference. I do not know why hon. Members should be harping on this point. If they come to my room, I can explain to them that there is practically no difference whatsoever in the concessions that the Government give."

Development of the Siddha System of Indian Medicine.

* 981 *Q.*—SRI K. V. RAMASWAMI (on behalf of Sri C. Kandasamy) : Will the Hon. the Minister for Health be pleased to state the efforts made by the Government to develop or to resuscitate the Siddha System of Indian Medicine?

THE HON. SRI A. B. SHETTY :—" The Siddha System of medicine is receiving due consideration from Government just as the other indigenous systems are viz., Ayurveda and Unani. The Siddha System of medicine is being taught in the College of Indigenous Medicine. Treatment in the Siddha System is given to the patients in the Government Hospital of Indigenous Medicine at Madras. Text-books on Siddha System have been written and printed at Government expense. The Government permit the local bodies to run institutions in this system of medicine. They also give maintenance grants in respect of medical institutions of Indigenous Medicine (including Siddha) run by private people, wherever necessary."

Expenditure incurred on the Soviet Cultural Delegation to Madras.

* 982 *Q.*—SRI V. BALAKRISHNAN : Will the Hon. the Minister for Finance be pleased to state—

(*a*) the total amount spent in connexion with the recent visit of the Soviet Cultural Delegation to Madras; and

(*b*) whether this amount has been spent by the Government of India, or by the State Government and if by both, what part by each?

THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM :—" (*a*) & (*b*) No information as to the total amount spent in connexion with the visit of Soviet Cultural Delegation to Madras between the 13th and the 20th of February 1954, is available, as they were the guests of the Government of India throughout their stay in India.